

Fort Sheridan, Bachelor Officers' Quarters
and Open Mess (Building No. 31)
Leonard Wood Avenue
Fort Sheridan
Lake County
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1113-6

HABS
ILL,
49-FTSH,
1/6-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historical American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20243

FORT SHERIDAN, BACHELOR OFFICERS' QUARTERS
AND OPEN MESS
(Building No. 31)

FORT SHERIDAN MILITARY DISTRICT

HABS
ILL,
49-FTSH,
1/6-

Location: Leonard Wood Avenue north of the parade grounds, Fort Sheridan, Lake County, Illinois.

USGS Highland Park Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16.432760.4673300.

Present Owner and Occupant: United States Army.

Present Use: Officers' Club.

Significance: Constructed to house Officers' Open Mess and Bachelor Officers' Quarters (BOQ), this was one of the most impressive of the original Holabird and Roche buildings both in size and in decorative architectural detail. While it has been partially rebuilt, the building retains sufficient integrity to be architecturally distinctive and serve as an example of buildings constructed for officers during this period in United States history.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1892.
2. Architect: Holabird and Roche, Chicago.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Army from date of construction to the present.
4. Contractor: Jonathan Clark and Sons and Company.
5. Original plan and construction: A long, rectangular, two and one-half story building constructed of buff-cream brick with a gable roof. There is a projecting wing on the facade and four projecting wings on the rear. The ridge of the roof

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runs east-west, and the entrance is in the long side. The building was constructed in two distinct sections. The eastern section was divided into twelve bachelor officers' quarters. The western section contained the officers' open mess.

A photograph of the building ca. 1897 shows a cupola on the ridge of the roof on the eastern section. Its pyramidal roof is similar to the original roof of the Water Tower. The cupola is no longer in place. The front projecting wing as depicted at this time had a second story overhang instead of the oriel window which projects from the second story today.

6. Alterations and additions: A fire in 1956 destroyed part of the western section of the building including the projecting wing on the facade. The projecting wing on the rear of the western section remained intact. The front projecting wing was rebuilt with an oriel window above the main entrance. A single story addition was constructed on the western end at this time. The easternmost of four rear projecting bays has been rebuilt. Some of the rear windows have been infilled with brick. The brick used in rebuilding and modifying the structure does not match the original. It is a pink-cream color.

The original slate roof covering has been replaced with asbestos shingles.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Original Architectural Drawings:

Holabird and Root, 300 West Adams Street, Chicago, Illinois 60606. Plans and elevations, n.d. The drawings are water damaged.

2. Old Views:

Jenkins, Charles E., "Holabird and Roche," Architectural Reviewer, June, 1897, p. 19.

Mackern, H.G. Fort Sheridan: At Attention and Rest, Chicago, H.G. Mackern, 1897, n.p.

Views of Fort Sheridan, Record Group 92, Audio Visual Archives, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C. ca. 1897. Reference nos. 92-F-61A-8, 92-F-61A-9.

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3. Bibliography:

Papers Relating to Fort Sheridan. Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence Files, 1784-1915 and Office of the Quartermaster General, Construction Division, Record Group 92. U.S. Army Continental Command, 6th Corps Area Records, Record Group 394 (contains specifications), National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.

Real Property Records, Directorate of Facilities Engineering, Fort Sheridan, Illinois.

Prepared by Sally Kress Tompkins
Architectural Historian
Historic American Buildings
Survey
June, 1979

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: A long building with two distinct sections. The original eastern section reflects the influence of the Richardsonian Romanesque style popular at the time of its construction. Truncated columns with foliated capitals, gabled dormers, corbeled brick brackets with stone caps at the end of the raked parapets divide the facade vertically.

The rebuilt western section's most distinctive feature is a large oriel window above the main entrance.

2. Condition of fabric: The building has been maintained in excellent condition.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions: The building is two and one-half stories high with a full basement and eighteen bays across

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the facade. It is 235' long and 45' wide. There is a short projecting wing 15' by 30' on the east section of the facade and four projecting wings on the rear. The westernmost of the rear wings is the longest, measuring 48' by 28'. The other three wings are 4'2" by 18'. A single story side addition on the west side is 32'3" by 75'4".

2. Foundations: Limestone rubble on the original eastern section, and random ashlar limestone on the rebuilt western section. A concrete watertable runs above the foundation at the rear of the building.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The original section is buff-cream colored brick. The reconstructed section is pink-cream brick. Both are laid in common bond, five rows of stretchers to one of headers. There is a brick watertable at the level of the first floor window sills.
4. Structural system: Brick bearing wall.
5. Porches: The eastern section of the building has a two story verandah inset under the roof at the third floor level. Eight wide brick piers with inset stone bands reach halfway up to the second story level. The piers terminate and two truncated columns with foliated capitals carry the structure up to the third floor which projects over the porch. A row of orange terra cotta tiles separates the columns from the roof. The verandah has concrete floors on both levels and black, cast iron railings. Three entrances on the first story level of the verandah are approached by flights of concrete stairs. A low passageway with concrete paving runs underneath the first story level of the verandah. The basement windows open on to this passageway.

A large cement and flagstone patio surrounded by a low brick wall has been constructed outside the main entrance on the western section of the building. A flight of concrete stairs leads up to it.

6. Chimneys: Two interior brick chimneys are located in the fire walls slightly forward of the roof ridge. An exterior end brick chimney is located on the east gable end of the front of the roof ridge. A second exterior end chimney on this side has been cut off at the roof level. An exterior brick chimney on the rear of the western section has been encompassed by the addition to the west side.

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7. Openings

- a. Doorways and doors: On the east section three entrances on the first floor level and three entrances on the second floor level have brick segmental arches formed by double rowlocks. The doors are solid wood with three lights. Oblong transoms have been filled in with wood panels. On the first floor level the doors have sidelights. The doors are painted black; the frames and transoms are painted gray.

On the rear of the east section, there are entrances at all four levels on each side of three projecting wings. The upper entrances are reached by fire escapes. The doors are solid wood with a single light. Both fire escape and doors are painted beige.

On the facade of the west section the main entrance has glass doors with metal frames and sidelights of diamond shaped colored glass. The entrance is at the top of a flight of concrete stairs with low brick walls. A door into the basement west of the main entrance is at the bottom of a flight of concrete stairs with metal hand rails which are painted black. The door is constructed of vertical planks. A single light is filled with diamond shaped colored glass. The door is painted black. A third door on the west facade is off the patio east of the main entrance. The narrow double doors with unpainted wood frames and long glass panels are similar to the adjacent casement windows.

On the rear of the west section there are two entrances: one provides access to the basement and has a metal door with a single light. The second door is at the first floor level and is solid wood with a single light. Both doors are painted beige.

- b. Windows: Segmental arches over the first and second story windows on the facade of the east section are formed by double rowlocks. The windows occur in sets of two with six sets at each level. On the third floor level the windows are set in dormers, four windows in each of three dormers. On the rear of the east section the windows are topped by flat arches of gauged brick.

The east section windows are one-over-one double hung sash.

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On the west section a large ariel window dominates the projecting wing on the facade. Below the window is a stone shield with a bas relief depicting General Philip Sheridan, for whom the post was named, on horseback. The windows on the first and second story levels are casement. On the first story level there are two lights above the casement windows. The windows on the rear follow a similar pattern. Those windows east of the main entrance on the small part of the west section which is original have flat gauged brick arches. The windows on the west side addition are banded together by a stone architrave.

8. Roof

- a. Shape and covering: The roof is a steeply pitched gable with intersecting gable roofs on the front and rear projecting wings of the west section. The roofs on the rear projecting wings of the east section are hipped with copper covering over the ridges. The roofs are covered with cement asbestos shingles.

The gable ends and the fire walls have raked parapets. Those in the east section have terra-cotta coping with corbeled brick brackets; those in the west section have stone coping with rounded stone brackets.

- b. Dormers: Three gabled dormers on the east section of the facade have four windows each. The gables above the windows are shingled. The windows have lug sills of limestone. Below each sill there are five stone brackets.

C. Description of Interior

The east section of the building originally served as Bachelor Officers' Quarters. It is broken down into apartments which average two to three rooms. The interiors have been remodeled and modernized. The section continues to serve as officers' quarters.

The west section was rebuilt after a fire in 1956. It originally contained the officers' mess. It now functions as an officers' club with dining room and kitchens on the first floor, a ballroom on the second, and a rathskeller in the basement.

The building was constructed with indoor plumbing and steam heat. The present steam heating system relies on oil rather than

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on coal as it did earlier. Electricity was available on the post as early as 1890, although the original lighting may have been by gas.

- D. Site: The building faces south with the ridge of the roof running east-west. It is located on the avenue which encircles the parade ground. Situated on the north side of the parade ground it is directly opposite the water tower which is on the south side. A road runs behind the building providing access to a row of concrete block garages. A circular drive passes directly in front of the main entrance of the west section. Low lying evergreen shrubbery is planted close to the building.

Prepared by Sally Kress Tompkins
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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) under the auspices of Interagency Archeological Services, Atlanta and funded by the U.S. Department of Army, Fort Sheridan, Illinois. It included a historical and architectural survey of the fort to provide the necessary data for implementation of the Fort Sheridan Historic District. Documentation was obtained on thirty-one buildings. The survey and documentation were accomplished by Sally Kress Tompkins, an architectural historian on the HABS staff, under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS; Kenneth Anderson, Principal Architect; Carolyn Pitts, Principal Historian; and Allen Chambers, architectural historian and editor. The photographs were taken by William Kumpf of Architectural Camera, Chicago.

ADDENDUM TO
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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
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